



INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁵ : G06F 15/72	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 92/21097 (43) International Publication Date: 26 November 1992 (26.11.92)		
<table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> (21) International Application Number: PCT/US92/04076 (22) International Filing Date: 14 May 1992 (14.05.92) (30) Priority data: 702,052 17 May 1991 (17.05.91) US (71) Applicant: INSCRIBE, INC. [US/US]; 222 Third Street, Suite 1120, Cambridge, MA 02142 (US). (72) Inventor: SIEBER, Jonathan, D. ; 20 Clubhouse Lane, Wayland, MA 01778 (US). (74) Agent: HENRY, Steven, J.; Wolf, Greenfield & Sacks, Federal Reserve Plaza, 600 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, MA 02210 (US). </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> (81) Designated States: AT (European patent), AU, BE (European patent), CA, CH (European patent), DE, DE (Utility model), DE (European patent), DK (European patent), ES (European patent), FR (European patent), GB (European patent), GR (European patent), IT (European patent), JP, LU (European patent), MC (European patent), NL (European patent), SE (European patent). Published <i>With international search report.</i> <i>Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i> </td> </tr> </table>			(21) International Application Number: PCT/US92/04076 (22) International Filing Date: 14 May 1992 (14.05.92) (30) Priority data: 702,052 17 May 1991 (17.05.91) US (71) Applicant: INSCRIBE, INC. [US/US]; 222 Third Street, Suite 1120, Cambridge, MA 02142 (US). (72) Inventor: SIEBER, Jonathan, D. ; 20 Clubhouse Lane, Wayland, MA 01778 (US). (74) Agent: HENRY, Steven, J.; Wolf, Greenfield & Sacks, Federal Reserve Plaza, 600 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, MA 02210 (US).	(81) Designated States: AT (European patent), AU, BE (European patent), CA, CH (European patent), DE, DE (Utility model), DE (European patent), DK (European patent), ES (European patent), FR (European patent), GB (European patent), GR (European patent), IT (European patent), JP, LU (European patent), MC (European patent), NL (European patent), SE (European patent). Published <i>With international search report.</i> <i>Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i>
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US92/04076 (22) International Filing Date: 14 May 1992 (14.05.92) (30) Priority data: 702,052 17 May 1991 (17.05.91) US (71) Applicant: INSCRIBE, INC. [US/US]; 222 Third Street, Suite 1120, Cambridge, MA 02142 (US). (72) Inventor: SIEBER, Jonathan, D. ; 20 Clubhouse Lane, Wayland, MA 01778 (US). (74) Agent: HENRY, Steven, J.; Wolf, Greenfield & Sacks, Federal Reserve Plaza, 600 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, MA 02210 (US).	(81) Designated States: AT (European patent), AU, BE (European patent), CA, CH (European patent), DE, DE (Utility model), DE (European patent), DK (European patent), ES (European patent), FR (European patent), GB (European patent), GR (European patent), IT (European patent), JP, LU (European patent), MC (European patent), NL (European patent), SE (European patent). Published <i>With international search report.</i> <i>Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i>			

(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR AUTOMATED PAGE LAYOUT OF TEXT AND GRAPHIC ELEMENTS**(57) Abstract**

A system for automatically generating the layout of the plurality of text and graphic elements on a page includes a memory device for storing a plurality of page specifications, each page specification including a plurality of constraints describing the layout of user-definable text elements and graphic elements on a paper. The system further includes an input device for selecting one of the page specifications in the memory and for entering data defining the text and graphic elements of the selected page specification. A processor, coupled to the memory device and the input device selectively manipulates the text elements and graphic elements to generate a page layout in accordance with the plurality of constraints of the selected page specification. An output device, either a video display or printer, is provided to display the generated page layout. A method for automated layout of user-definable text and graphic elements on a page is further disclosed.

22

PAGE SPECIFICATION				
PAGE DESCRIPTOR		PD1		
PAGE DESCRIPTOR		PD2		
DS1	CHARACTER STRING	FONT	SIZE	PLACEMENT
DS2				
DS3				
DS4				
DS6				
CONSTRAINT 1				C1
CONSTRAINT 2				C2
CONSTRAINT 3				C3
GDI	GRAPHIC DATA			LOCATION

FOR THE PURPOSES OF INFORMATION ONLY

Codes used to identify States party to the PCT on the front pages of pamphlets publishing international applications under the PCT.

AT	Austria	FI	Finland	MI	Mali
AU	Australia	FR	France	MN	Mongolia
BB	Barbados	GA	Gabon	MR	Mauritania
BE	Belgium	GB	United Kingdom	MW	Malawi
BF	Burkina Faso	GN	Guinea	NL	Netherlands
BG	Bulgaria	GR	Greece	NO	Norway
BJ	Benin	HU	Hungary	PL	Poland
BR	Brazil	IE	Ireland	RO	Romania
CA	Canada	IT	Italy	RU	Russian Federation
CF	Central African Republic	JP	Japan	SD	Sudan
CG	Congo	KP	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	SE	Sweden
CH	Switzerland	KR	Republic of Korea	SN	Senegal
CI	Côte d'Ivoire	LI	Liechtenstein	SU	Soviet Union
CM	Cameroon	LK	Sri Lanka	TD	Chad
CS	Czechoslovakia	LU	Luxembourg	TG	Togo
DE	Germany	MC	Monaco	US	United States of America
DK	Denmark	MG	Madagascar		
ES	Spain				

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR AUTOMATED PAGE LAYOUT
OF TEXT AND GRAPHIC ELEMENTS

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to electronic publishing, and more particularly, to a system for automatically generating the page layout of a printed document from user-defined text and graphic elements.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The design of printed material, i.e., the page layout, has historically been closely tied to the available page production technology. As publishing technology has evolved from early metal type technology to digitally scaled type technology, electronic publishing tools have likewise evolved. Early electronic publishing tools, such as TROFF by Bell Laboratories, Murray Hill, NJ, were designed to accommodate a page model of metal type which was laid out, from beginning to end, in a single process. These early publishing tools, required the user to embed descriptions of the page layout in the document itself. The embedded descriptions were later interpreted by a formatting program in a batch-oriented

-2-

manner. That is, the layout process occurred without human interaction.

More recent interactive programs such as INTERLEAF by Interleaf Publishing, Inc., Waltham, MA, U.S.A. allow the user to see the page layout in real time as it is being edited. Such programs are particularly suited for arranging the page layout of running text, and include facilities for breaking up lines, columns and pages of text. The parameters available to the user to design the page layout typically control word hyphenation, line length, formatting of page headers, footers and margins, formatting of text into columns, and flow of text around graphics. Further, once a page layout is defined by the user, these programs allow a multipage document to be created with a consistent look throughout all pages. Although such publishing tools are appropriate for formatting running text, they are less well-suited for applications in which a number of graphical and text elements must relate to each other in complex ways. For this reason, page layout for ads and many other graphically oriented documents were still done by a graphic designer using hand paste-ups.

Still more recently, graphics-oriented publishing tools such as PAGE MAKER by Aldus, Corp. Seattle, WA, and COREL DRAW by Corel System, Corp., Ottawa, Canada have combined interactive text formatting with graphics editing commands to give the user the ability to interactively place individual text or graphical

-3-

objects anywhere on a page to effect an electronic paste-up of a page. With these newer tools, the designer is given much creative freedom, and interactively makes numerous changes to the page layout, typically on a trial and error basis, until the desired page layout is achieved. These tools are most suited for one-of-a-kind page layouts in which the choice of type and positioning of graphics and lettering is critical.

In documents such as business stationery, letterhead, business cards, resumes, restaurant menus, wedding invitations, and printed advertisements, the text and graphic elements are arranged in complex relationships. Unfortunately, none of the above-described publishing tools is capable of capturing these complex relationships. The text oriented publishing tools are too structured to achieve the desired document formats while the graphics-oriented publishing tools, require the designer to execute countless revisions of the page layout before achieving the desired format.

There exists a need for an electronic publishing tool which simplifies the design of documents which contain both text and graphic elements and which is capable of capturing the complex relationship between these elements.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a system which automates the page layout of graphic and text elements in a printed document.

-4-

Another object of the present invention is to provide a system which stores a plurality of page specifications, each page specification comprising a plurality of constraints describing the layout of user-definable text and graphic elements.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a system which allows the user to select a page specification, define text and graphic elements, and then automatically generate a page layout in accordance with the page specification through selective manipulation of the text and graphic elements.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a system which automates the page layout process, frees the designer from executing numerous revisions of the page layout to reach the desired format.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a method by which text and graphic elements in a page layout are automatically arranged in accordance with a plurality of constraints of a selected page specification.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a method for automating the layout of text and graphic elements on a page which frees the designer from executing numerous revisions of the page layout until the desired format is achieved.

-5-

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The above and other objects are achieved in accordance with the present invention which, according to a first aspect, provides an apparatus for automatically generating a layout of a plurality of text elements and graphic elements on a page. The apparatus comprises means for storing a plurality of page specifications, each page specification comprising a plurality of constraints describing the layout of user-definable text elements and graphic elements on a paper. Means are provided for selecting one of the page specifications as well as for receiving and storing user-defined character strings and graphic data defining the text elements and graphic elements, respectively, of the selected page specification. The apparatus further comprises means for manipulating the text and graphic elements of the selected page specification to automatically generate a page layout in accordance with the constraints of the selected page specification. Finally, the apparatus includes means for displaying the generated page layout.

In accordance with a second aspect of the present invention, a method is provided for automated layout of text and graphic elements on a page. Such method comprises the steps of establishing a plurality of page specifications, each containing a plurality of constraints describing the layout of user definable text and graphic elements, selecting one of the page

-6-

specifications, defining the text and graphics elements, arranging the text and graphic elements into a page layout automatically in accordance with the constraints of the selected page specification, and displaying the arranged page layout.

The foregoing and other features, objects and advantages of the invention will be more fully understood by reading the detailed description below in conjunction with the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the drawings:

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of an apparatus for automatically generating a page layout according to the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a conceptual illustration of a generic document in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 3 is a conceptual illustration of the page specification of the document of FIG. 2 in accordance with the present invention; and

FIG. 4 is a flow chart illustrating the steps of a method for automated layout of a page according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

With reference now to the drawings, and more particularly to FIG. 1 thereof, a system 10 in accordance with the present invention is shown.

-7-

System 10 is a computer-based system which comprises a digital processor 12 coupled to an input/output device 14, an optional printer 16, and a memory device 20. Digital processor 12 has a central processing unit 15 and a quantity of RAM memory 18 sufficient to execute the operations of the present invention, as explained hereinafter. Any number of commercially available computers are suitable for use as digital processor 12, ranging from microprocessor-based personal computers, to work stations, minicomputers and even main frame computers.

Input/output device 14 is typically a conventional computer terminal having a CRT display and an alphanumeric keyboard, for both sending and receiving data to and from digital processor 12. Output device 16 typically comprises a printer for displaying the results of the generated page layouts according to the present invention. Output device 16 is optional if device 14 is capable of visually displaying the generated page layout, as with most conventional computer terminals.

Digital processor 12 is coupled to a memory 20 through conventional input/output controllers and/or bus structures, depending on the implementation of memory 20. If digital processor 12 includes an adequate amount of on board RAM memory, memory 20 may comprise a ROM memory implemented with an optical disk or ROM cartridge. Alternately, memory 20 may comprise a RAM memory and may be implemented with a magnetic disk, magnetic tape, or a semiconductor memory. It

-8-

will be obvious to those reasonably skilled in the art that memory 20 may be implemented with a hard disk drive located directly in digital processor 12. It will be further obvious to those reasonably skilled in the art that system 10 may comprise a microprocessor based personal computer which has a keyboard and CRT terminal coupled thereto and contains adequate memory capacity to store the database and program of the present invention, as explained hereinafter.

As indicated in FIG. 1, memory 20 stores a program 26 of proprietary source code, and a database 25 of one or more page specifications. Each page specification generically describes the page layout of a document, such as a business card, wedding invitation or business letterhead.

Each page specification comprises page descriptors, undefined graphic and text elements, and a plurality of constraints relating to the graphic and text elements, and their relationships to one another and the page description.

For example, page specification 22, shown conceptually in FIGS. 1 and 3, describes a generic document 30, shown conceptually in FIG. 2, which for the purposes of illustration is a business card. Document 30 comprises a page 28 having a default shape of unspecified dimensions. In the illustrative embodiment, page 28 has a landscape format, i.e. the width of the page is greater than the height of the page. Document 30 further includes an undefined graphics element G1 as well as undefined text elements T1-T6.

-9-

Referring to FIG. 3, page specification 22, comprises a plurality of data structures representing the text and graphics elements of document 30, as well as a plurality of constraints which dictate the relationships of the graphics and text elements to one another as well as to the page description. Text elements T1-T6 of document 30 are represented in page specification 22 by data structure DS1-DS6, respectively, which have the user-definable attributes of font style, character string, size, and location, as indicated. Graphics element G1 is also represented by a data structure GD1 having the user-definable attributes of location, size, and actual graphics data. A plurality of other data structures, page descriptors PD1-PD2, within page specification 22 define unchangeable aspects of the page 28. Page specification 22 further comprises a plurality of constraints C1-CN which describe various aspects of page 28 as well as the size and placement of the text and graphic elements of document 30 and their relationship to each other and to page 28.

To illustrate how page specification 22 describes a generic document, consider again document 30 of FIG. 2, the business card. Page 28 represents the actual medium, typically paper, on which the business card is printed. The default shape of page 28 is dictated by the page descriptors in page specification 22 and may or may not be user-definable. As illustrated, page 28 has a landscape format. In document 30, text element T1 30 generically represents the business card

-10-

holder's name. The text element T2 generically represents the card holder's title. Text element T3 generically represents the business name, while text element T4 generically represents the business address. Text element T5 generically represents the business telephone number. The text element T6 generically represents optional specialty information such as professional services or products produced by the business. A graphic element G1 generically represents optional graphic information such as a corporate logo or other symbols associated with the card holder's business or trade.

Constraints C1-CN of page specification 22 relate to the actual format of page 28 and the way in which text elements T1-T6 and graphic element G1 relate to one another and to page 28. For example, constraint C1 may require that no text or graphic element be located closer than 1/8 inch to the perimeter of page 28. Constraint C2 may require that text element T1, the cardholder's name, be center within page 28. Constraint C3 may require that text element T2, the cardholder's title, has a type size which is not greater than 1/2 of the type size of the cardholder's name in text element T1. Constraint C4 may require that text element T2, the cardholder's title, be centered beneath text element T1, the cardholder's name. Constraint C5 may require that the type size of text element T3, the business name, be larger than the type size of text element T4, the business address. Constraint C6 may require that text element T5, the

-11-

business telephone information, be located in the lower left hand corner of page 28. Constraint C7 may require that the first character of text element T6, the specialty information, and the first character of text element T4, the business address be aligned vertically. Constraint C8 may require that graphic element G1, the corporate logo or symbol, if any, be located in the upper right corner of page 28. Numerous other constraints are possible. Still other constraints may define which attributes of the text elements T1-T6 and graphic element G1 are usually definable and what the attribute default values are. Still other constraints may group text or graphic elements into hierarchical structure of derived elements which must be manipulated as single entities.

It will be appreciated by those reasonably skilled in the art that the above-described constraints are for exemplary purposes. The constraints, page descriptors and data structure describing the text elements and graphics elements are not limited to those listed herein and may be structured and defined as desired by the designer of the page specification, typically an experienced graphic designer, to achieve the desired generic document.

Database 25 may contain numerous page specifications, with each specification defining a different generic document. For example, the database may contain several page specifications, each of which generically describes a different business card. By

-12-

using data structures having default attributes which can be selectively redefined by the user, and a plurality of predefined constraints, a generic page layout is described in each page specification which captures the complex relationships between the graphic and text elements in the page, yet allows the user several degrees of freedom to individually tailor the generic page layout to reflect the desired information.

Referring again to Figure 1, memory 20 contains a proprietary program 26 which, when executed by digital processor 12, enables the user to interact with the database 25 and automatically generates a page layout, given a selected page specification from database 25 and the information supplied by the user. Program 26 contains conventional user interface subroutines which allow the user to select one of the page specifications in database 25 and to interactively enter user information, such as character strings and a graphic data, into RAM memory associated with the data structures of the selected page specification. Once a page specification is selected and all user-definable data is entered, a number of subroutines in a program 26 compare the user-defined data and corresponding data structures of the selected page specification with the constraints of the page specification. If one or more of the constraints cannot be satisfied, as will typically be the case, with the user-defined data as received, a plurality of subroutines are used to selectively modify various

-13-

attributes of the user-defined text and graphic elements until substantially all of the constraints of the page specification are met.

Program 26 contains subroutines which, for example, change the type size of a character string in a text element, if the default type size and/or user specified type size is inappropriate to satisfy a particular constraint of the page specification. Program 26 may further contains subroutines for stretching the character string of a text element by changing the length of a character string in a single direction thereby maintaining the string aligned with another reference point while increasing its overall length. Such a subroutine may involve an algorithm which changes the spacing between particular characters of a font style or it may distort the character themselves. Program 26 may contain still other subroutines which scale a specific character string of a text element forcing it to either fill or fit within a given area to comply with a constraint of the page specification.

If the placement of a text or graphic element, as defined by the user or by default attributes, does not satisfy one of the constraints of the selected page specification, program 26 may further include subroutines which change the spacing between text and graphic elements by increasing or decreasing the amount of space between the elements themselves as well as the perimeter of the page. Program 26 may contain further subroutines which change the aspect

-14-

ratio, i.e. the length to width ratio of the page 28, to conform the user-defined information with the various constraints of the page specification.

It will be obvious to those reasonably skilled in the art that program 26 is not limited to the subroutines described herein and may contain other subroutines which change the size, placement and relationship of the text and graphic elements of the selected page specification in relation to one another as well as the page definition.

It may be appreciated that program 26 has the ability to modify the user defined information in the page specification to optimize the number of constraints which are satisfied. In doing so, the program executes numerous theoretical combinations of changes, depending on the number of constraints and elements within the page specification. In this manner, a user selects a generic page specification and indicates the desired character strings. The computer then executes the redundant iterative trial and error revisions of the text and graphics elements to satisfy the page specification and create a document having a page layout which is aesthetically pleasing to the user.

In one embodiment of the present invention, all constraints in a given page specification are of equal importance. In an alternate embodiment, certain constraints are given higher priority than others within the same page specification. In generating the page layout, the higher priority constraints must be

-15-

satisfied while the lower priority constraints may or may not be. For example, with the business card of generic document 30, a constraint that the cardholder's name be centered within page 28 would be given a higher priority than a constraint requiring the cardholder's name be located a specific distance from any graphic elements on the page. In this alternate embodiment, the page specification may allow considerable degrees of freedom while still achieving satisfaction of the highest priority constraints in the selected page specification.

Referring to FIG. 4, a flowchart illustrating the steps of a method for automated layout of a page, according to a second aspect of the present invention, is illustrated. Following power-up and initialization of system 10, as indicated by step 40, the user is prompted and selects one of the page specifications from database 25 in memory 20, as indicated by process step 42. For the purposes of illustration, the selected page specification is assumed to be page specification 22 representing generic document 30, the business card. The program 26 then prompts the user to enter information into RAM memory 18 of processor 12, as indicated in processing step 44.

For example, the user will be prompted to enter the desired dimensions of the page 28, as well as the desired aspect ratio, i.e. portrait or landscape format, if applicable. The user will be further prompted to enter the individual character strings of each of text element T1-T6, as well as the desired

-16-

font styles, for example Helvetica, Times, Old English, etc., of each text string, if permitted by the constraints of the selected page specification. The user may additionally be able to specify the location and type size of text elements T1-T6. The user may further specify the location of graphics element G1 and provide graphical data which may be either entered directly by the user, with a graphic generating program or which may be previously stored in the system.

Once the user data is entered into the memory, program 26 begins to manipulate the text and graphic elements to satisfy the constraints of the selected page specification, as indicated in process step 46 of FIG. 4. For example, if the user has entered a cardholder name in text element T1 with an abnormally long string of characters, program 26 may reduce the size of the type in order to center the text element within page 28. This, in turn, may require a relocation of text element T2, representing the cardholder's title, in order to satisfy the constraint that the cardholder title be centered beneath the cardholder's name. These changes to text elements T1 and T2 may further require that the spacing or locations of text elements T3, T4, T5 and T6 be changed or relocated with respect to page 28 in order to satisfy other of the constraints within the page specification.

As previously described, the program uses subroutines which scale, stretch and change the size

-17-

and location of text or graphic data to accommodate the constraints of the specification. After each change to a text or graphic element, the system determines whether all or a majority of the page constraints of the page specification are satisfied, as indicated in decisional step 48. If this condition is not true, further iterations of steps 46 and 48 occur until program 26 determines, in decisional step 48, that all or a substantial majority of constraints are satisfied.

Once program 26 has generated a page 28 which satisfies the constraints of the page specification 22 given the user information, the resulting page layout may be either electronically displayed on input/output device 14 or printed on output device 16, as indicated in process step 50. At this point, the user may choose to create another document using the same method or to end the session, as indicated in decisional step 52. If the user wishes to create another document, the program again queries the user to select a new page specification which is appropriate for the desired document, as indicated in step 42. If the user does not wish to create a new document, the system may be powered down or the session ended, as indicated in step 54.

It will be appreciated from the foregoing, that the method and apparatus of the present invention provides a user with relative degrees of freedom in creating a document while simultaneously freeing the user from making countless revisions to the page

-18-

layout of a document. Such a system and method are particularly well suited for applications in which generic documents containing individualized information are desired, for example, diplomas, certificates, business cards, wedding invitations, menus, printed advertisements, English language versions of foreign advertisements, etc. As such, the present invention allows a user to select a generically described document and, with numerous degrees of freedom, tailor the generic documents to the desired page layout.

Accordingly, it will be appreciated that the detailed disclosure has been presented by way of example only and is not intended to be limiting. Various alternatives, modifications and improvements will readily occur to those skilled in the art, and may be practiced without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. The invention is limited only as required by the following claims and equivalents thereto.

What is claimed is:

-19-

1. A method for automated layout of text elements and graphic elements on a page, comprising the steps of:

a. selecting one of a plurality of page specifications stored in a memory device, each page specification comprising a plurality of constraints describing the layout of user-definable text elements and graphic elements on a page;

b. defining said text elements and graphic elements;

c. arranging said text elements and graphic elements into a page layout automatically in accordance with said plurality of constraints of said selected one page specification; and

d. displaying the page layout arranged in step (c).

2. The method of claim 1 wherein step (a) further comprises the further steps of:

defining said plurality of constraints; and

storing said plurality of constraints in a memory device.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said plurality of constraints comprises:

a constraint on the size of one of the plurality of elements relative to others of said plurality of elements and to the page.

-20-

4. The method of claim 1 wherein said plurality of constraints comprises:

a constraint on the placement of one of the plurality of elements relative to others of said plurality of elements and to the page.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein said plurality of constraints comprises:

at least one scaling constraint requiring one of the plurality of elements to fill or fit a designated area of the page.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein said plurality of constraints comprises:

a constraint on the aspect ratio of the page.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein step (b) comprises the further steps of:

defining the size of the page; and
defining the aspect ratio of the page.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein step (b) further comprises the step of:

selecting a font style for one of the text elements of the page specification.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein step (b) comprises:

defining the character strings of the text elements of the page specification.

-21-

10. The method of claim 1 wherein step (b) comprises:

defining the graphic data of the graphic elements of the page specification.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein step (c) comprises the step of:

scaling the size of one of the text elements and graphic elements in accordance with said plurality of constraints of said selected page specification.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein step (c) comprises the step of:

changing the spacing between ones of the text elements and graphic elements in accordance with said plurality of constraints of said selected page specification.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein step (c) comprises the step of:

changing the line breaks in the character strings of one of the text elements defined in step (b).

14. The method of claim 1 wherein step (c) comprises:

stretching the character string of at least one text element defined in step (b) by changing the lengths of the character strings in a single direction.

-22-

15. The method of claim 1 wherein step (d) comprises:

displaying the page layout of step (c) electronically on a display device.

16. The method of claim 1 wherein step (d) comprises:

printing the page layout of step (c) on a printer.

17. The method of claim 1 wherein step (c) comprises:

manipulating said text elements and graphic elements so that at least one of said plurality of constraints is complied with exactly.

18. The method of claim 1 wherein said plurality of constraints have a hierarchical arrangement in which some of said constraints have a higher priority than other of said constraints and wherein the higher priority constraints are satisfied in step (c).

19. An apparatus for automatically generating a layout of a plurality of text elements and graphic elements on a page, the apparatus comprising:

a. memory means for storing a plurality of page specifications, each page specification comprising a plurality of constraints describing the layout of user-definable text elements and graphic elements on a output medium;

-23-

b. means, coupled to said memory means, for selecting one of said page specifications;

c. receiving means for receiving and storing user-defined character strings defining said text elements of said one page specification and user-defined graphic data defining said graphic elements of said one page specification;

d. means, responsive to said memory means and said receiving means, for manipulating said plurality of text elements and said plurality of graphic elements of said one page specification to automatically generate a page layout in accordance with the plurality of constraints of said one page specification; and

e. means for displaying the generated page layout.

20. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said means for displaying comprises a video display device.

21. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said means for displaying comprises a printer.

22. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said plurality of constraints comprises:

at least one constraint on the size of one of the plurality of elements relative to others of said plurality of elements and to the page.

23. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said plurality of constraints comprises:

-24-

at least one constraint on the placement of one of the plurality of elements relative to other of said plurality of elements and to the page.

24. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said plurality of constraints comprises:

at least one scaling constraint requiring one of the plurality of elements to fill or fit a designated area of the page.

25. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said plurality of constraints comprises:

a constraint on the aspect ratio of the page.

26. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said means for manipulating comprises:

means for scaling the size of one of the text elements in accordance with one of said constraints of said one page specification.

27. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said means for manipulating comprises:

means for changing the spacing between the text elements and graphic elements in accordance with one of said constraints of said one page specification.

28. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said means for manipulating comprises:

means for changing the line breaks in the user-defined character strings of a text element of said one page specification.

-25-

29. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said means for manipulating comprises:

means for stretching a user-defined character string of a text element by changing the length of the character string in a single direction.

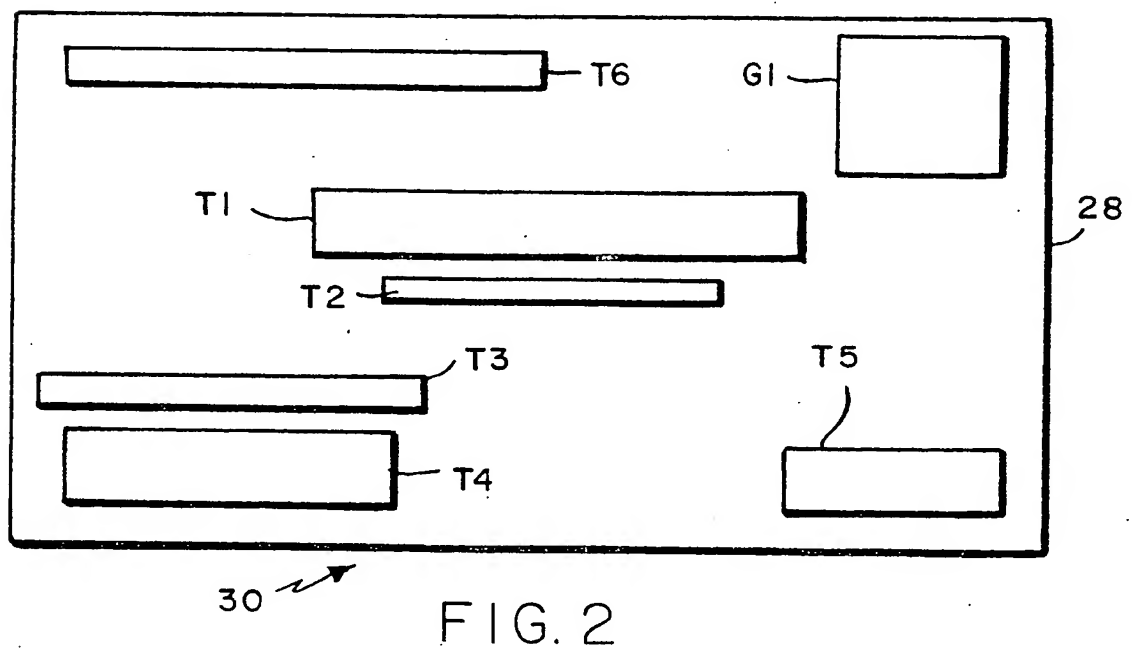
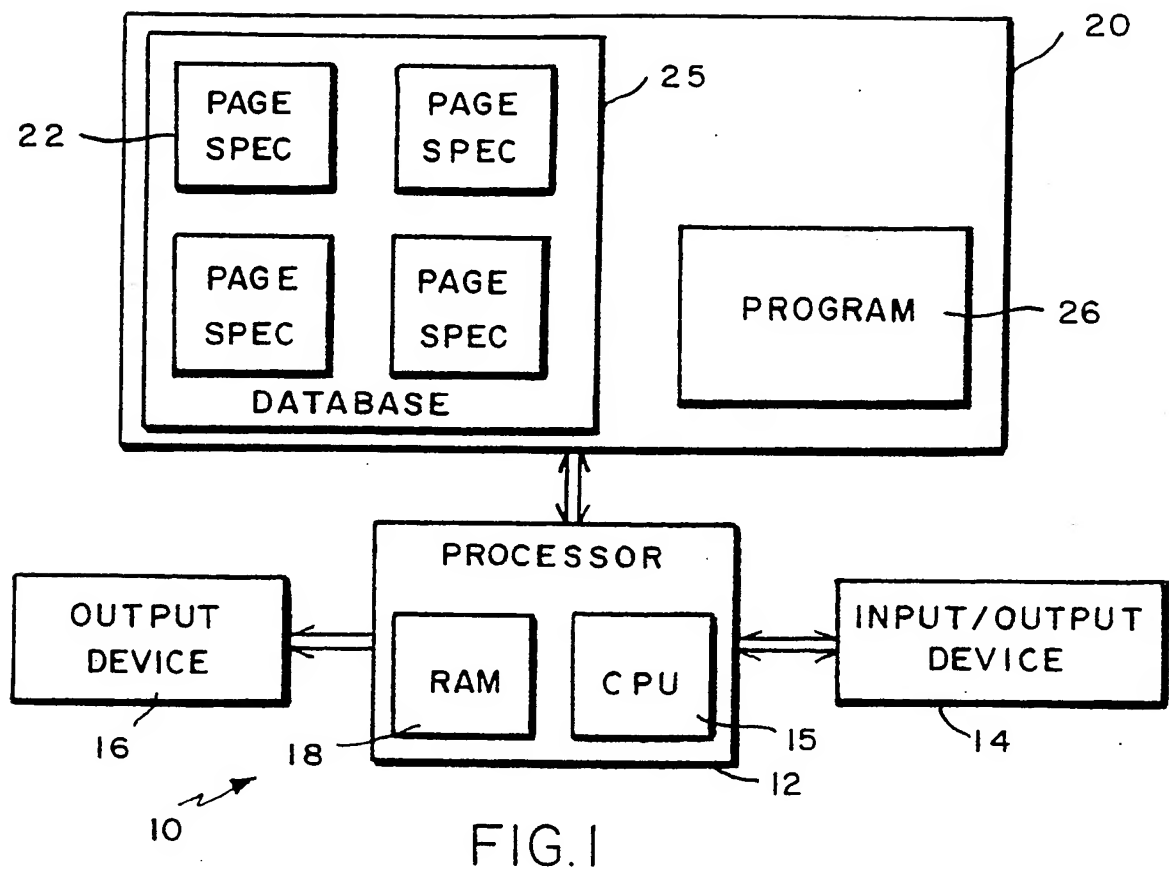
30. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said means for storing is a ROM memory device.

31. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said means for manipulating comprises:

means for scaling the size of one of the graphic elements in accordance with one of said constraints of said one page specification.

32. The method of claim 1 wherein said plurality of constraints comprises:

at least one constraint which arranges ones of said text elements and graphic elements into hierarchical structure which is manipulated as a single entity.



SUBSTITUTE SHEET

PAGE SPECIFICATION

PAGE DESCRIPTOR	PD1
PAGE DESCRIPTOR	PD2

DS1	CHARACTER STRING	FONT	SIZE	PLACEMENT
DS2				
DS3				
DS4				
DS6				

CONSTRAINT 1	C1
CONSTRAINT 2	C2
CONSTRAINT 3	C3

GDI	GRAPHIC DATA	LOCATION

FIG. 3

SUBSTITUTE SHEET

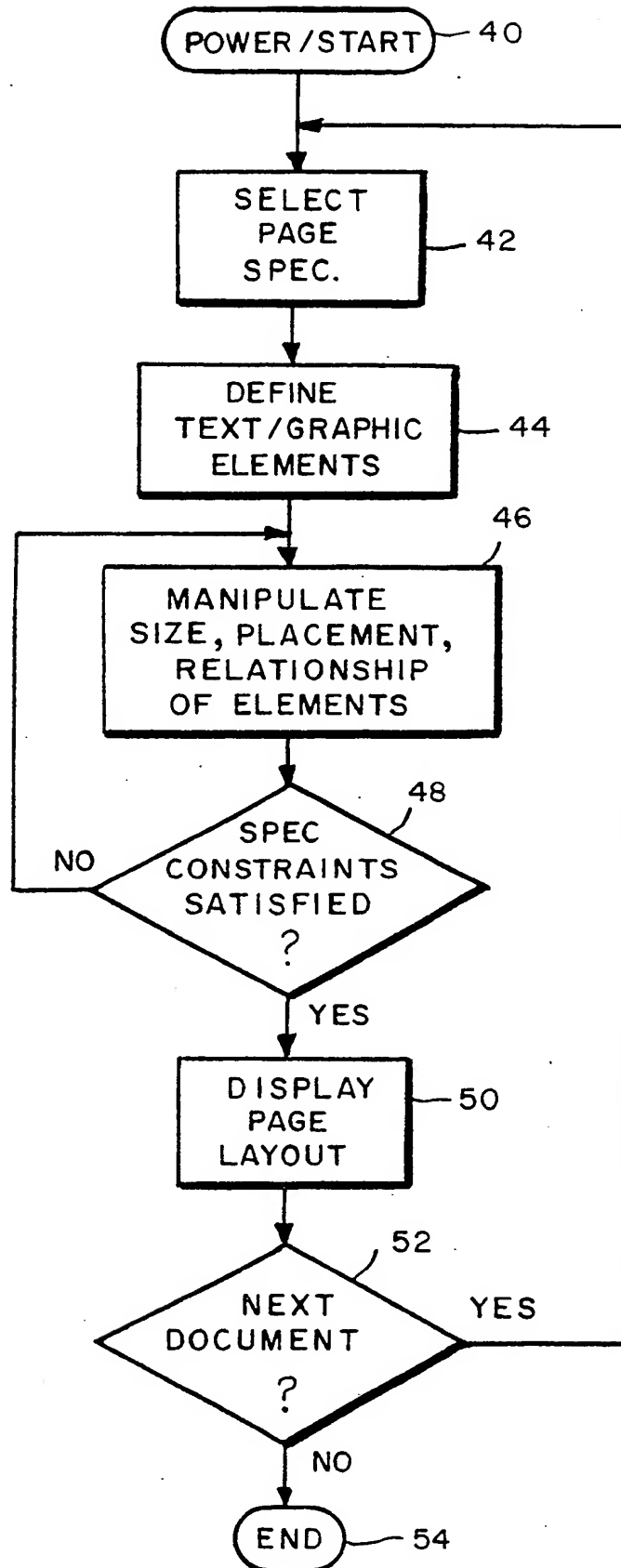


FIG. 4

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

PCT/US 92/04076

International Application No.

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) ⁶		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC Int.Cl. 5 G06F15/72		
II. FIELDS SEARCHED		
Minimum Documentation Searched ⁷		
Classification System	Classification Symbols	
Int.Cl. 5	G06F	
Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched ⁸		
III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT⁹		
Category ¹⁰	Citation of Document, ¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹²	Relevant to Claim No. ¹³
X	COMPUTERS AND GRAPHICS. vol. 11, no. 4, 1987, OXFORD GB pages 377 - 387; GRUBER W.: 'STRUCTURES OF AN INTEGRATED DOCUMENT WORKSTATION' see page 380, right column, line 27 - page 381, right column, line 48 see page 382, right column, line 1 - line 7 ---	1-32
A	IBM TECHNICAL DISCLOSURE BULLETIN. vol. 30, no. 2, July 1987, NEW YORK US pages 903 - 909; -: 'VARIABLE OBJECT SPACE IN MIXED OBJECT DOCUMENT CONTENT ARCHITECTURE' see the whole document ---	1-3, 5, 9-14, 19, 22, 24, 26-29, 31
<p>¹⁰ Special categories of cited documents : ¹⁰</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p> <p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p>		
IV. CERTIFICATION		
Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search	Date of Mailing of this International Search Report	
09 SEPTEMBER 1992	25. 09. 92	
International Searching Authority	Signature of Authorized Officer	
EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE	PIERFEDERICI A.	

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (January 1985)

THIS PAGE BLANK (USPTO)